

January 16, 2009

**Update for the Reporting of *Clostridium difficile* Rulemaking
Arizona Administrative Code (A.A.C.), Title 9, Chapter 6, Article 2, Table 3**

Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.) § 36-136(H)(1) states that the Arizona Department of Health Services (Department) shall “define and prescribe reasonably necessary measures for detecting, reporting, preventing, and controlling communicable and preventable diseases.” One mechanism by which the Department implements A.R.S. § 36-136(H)(1) is by requiring clinical laboratories to report positive test results for disease-causing agents specified in 9 A.A.C. Chapter 6, Article 2, Table 3. For some agents, clinical laboratories are also required in Table 3 to submit a specimen for each positive test result.

Recently, a more virulent strain of the bacteria, *Clostridium difficile*, has been detected. This type of bacteria causes diarrhea, which may progress to colitis, sepsis, and death. The Department needs to determine the incidence of the more virulent strain of bacteria in Arizona to enable the Department to assess the threat *Clostridium difficile* poses to public health.

This rulemaking adds a time-limited requirement for clinical laboratories to report positive results for *Clostridium difficile* to the Department by adding *Clostridium difficile* to the list of reportable agents in Table 3. The rulemaking also requires large-volume clinical laboratories to submit specimens positive for *Clostridium difficile* so the Department can determine if the specimen contains the more virulent strain of the bacteria.

Stakeholders can communicate their issues and concerns about the revision to Ruthann Smejkal, Rules Analyst for the Department, by e-mail at smejkar@azdhs.gov, by phone at 602-364-1230, or by fax at 602-364-1150.